REMARKS

The present response is to the Office Action mailed in the above-referenced case on October 10, 2008.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC 103

2.   Claims 20-21 and 31-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ficco et al. U.S. Publication 200210035404 (hereinafter "Ficco") and Ramakrishnan et al. US. Patent 5,634,346 (hereinafter "Ramakrishnan").

Referring to claims 20 and 31, Ficco teaches a system and method comprising an interactive interface presented on a display of a computer appliance enabling a user to select through the interactive display individual ones of a set of mechanical functions of a microprocessor-controlled device (users can use the GUI provided on the display of the STB to control functions and commands of microprocessor controlled devices such as a TV, air conditioning system, etc.) (Ficco: page 2, paragraph 0019 and page 3, paragraphs 0037-0038 and 0043), and to select specific time-of-day (TOD) for functions selected (users can set the time when functions are to start) (Ficco: page 3, paragraph 0043); wherein the computer appliance saves the TOD selected for each mechanical function selected, in a form compatible with and recognizable by the microprocessor-controlled device, to be transferred to the microprocessor-controlled device (information pertinent to a particular device may be stored in storage and transmitted to the device in a compatible format, i.e. in a script designated for the particular device) (Ficco: page 2 paragraph 0019, page 8, paragraph 0089 and page 11, paragraph 0124). However, Ficco fail to explicitly teach selecting the starting or stopping times for the mechanical functions selected. Ramakrishnan teaches remote control of mechanical functions of a device (remotely controlling operations of an air conditioner) (Ramakrishnan: column 1, lines 45-49) similar to that of Ficco. In addition, Ramakrishnan further teaches selecting specific TOD for starting or stopping the mechanical functions selected (the user sets the start and end

times for the air conditioner) (Ramakrishnan: column 1, lines 48-49 and column 5, lines 22-37), wherein the TOD selected for each mechanical function is saved (the controller saves. i.e. stores the start and stop times set) (Ramakrishnan: column 1, lines 54-57 and column 5, lines 41-47). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Ficco and Ramakrishnan before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the control and configuration of controlled devices of the home network of Ficco, to include controlling the AC system via setting the start and stop times for the system, as taught by Ramakrishnan, in order to obtain a home network system that allows users to program the start and stop times for a function of a controlled device via an interface of a computer appliance, to be saved and transferred to the controlled device. One would have been motivated to make such a combination in order to provide users with the flexibility of controlling equipments in a home network from anywhere in the world; such a combination further minimizes the need for repeated user involvement in controlling and operating equipments in a home network.

Referring to claims 21 and 32, Ficco, as modified, teach one of a thumb drive or a magnetic strip (magnetic storage devices) (Ficco: pages 4-5, paragraph 0055), wherein the output information is saved to the thumb drive or a magnetic strip to he transferred to the microprocessor-controlled device (information pertinent to a particular device may be stored in storage and transmitted to the device in a compatible format, i.e. in a script designated for the particular device; the storage include magnetic storage devices) (Ficco: page 2 paragraph 0019, pages 4-5, paragraph 0055, page 8, paragraph 0089 and page 11, paragraph 0124)

3.   Claims 28 and 39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ficco et al. U.S. Publication 2002/0035404 (hereinafter "Ficco") and Ramakrishnan et al. US. Patent 5,634,346 (hereinafter "Ramakrishnan"), as applied to claims 20 and 31 above, and further in view of Addink et al. U.S. Publication 2002/0091452 (hereinafter "Addink").

Referring to claims 28 and 39, Ficco and Ramakrishnan teach all of the limitations as applied to claims 20 and 31 above. Specifically, Ficco and Ramakrishnan teach wherein the programmable device is a timing device for a sprinkler system (the controlled devices that can be commanded according to a timing parameter include a sprinkler system) (Ficco: page 3, paragraphs 0040 and 0043), and the mechanical functions are opening and closing of switches (switch to open or close the circuit for a fan) (Ramakrishnan: column 6, lines 46-51). However, Ficco and Ramakrishnan fail to explicitly teach that the switches are for opening and closing of water valves. Addink teaches the use of a master controller to control a plurality of other devices (Addink: page 1, paragraph 0006) similar to that of Ficco and Ramakrishnan. In addition, Addink further teaches controlling a water valve in a sprinkler via opening and closing a switch (controlling the water irrigation valve for sprinkler heads allowing water to be distributed) (Addink: page 3, paragraph 0028). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Ficco, Ramakrishnan and Addink before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the programmable timing device for the sprinkler system of Ficco and Ramakrishnan to include the opening and closing of switches for controlling water valves, as taught by Addink, in order to obtain predictable results. Controlling a sprinkler system via opening and closing a water valve is well known to one of ordinary skill in the art, therefore, substituting the mechanical functions of the sprinkler system of Ficco and Ramakrishnan with the mechanical functions of opening and closing the water valve of a sprinkler system of Addink would obtain the predictable results of controlling when the sprinkler is turned on and off via opening and closing of water valves for the sprinkler.

Applicant's response:

The fact of downloading timing information for a remote device to a Thumb Drive through USB port is at the heart of the present invention. This allows manufacturers of microprocessor-controlled devices to make and sell devices, such as

lawn sprinklers and the like, with a USB port for receiving the timing information, rather than a much more complicated and expensive Input/Output and programming system and interface, such as a touchscreen or a keyboard. The thumb drive was recited in claim 21 and 32, but the examiner equated the thumb drive to "magnetic storage devices" in the examiner's paragraph 2, specifically "Referring to claims 21 and 32, Ficco, as modified, teach one of a thumb drive or a magnetic strip (magnetic storage devices) (Ficco: pages 4-5, paragraph 0055)." Ficco paragraph 55 is repeated just below:

[0055] HDD 320 is actually a specific example of a mass storage device. In other words, the HDD 320 may be replaced with other mass storage devices as is generally known in the art, such as known magnetic and/or optical storage devices, (i.e., embodied as RAM, a recordable CD, a flash card, memory stick, etc.). In an exemplary configuration, HDD 320 may have a capacity of at least about 25 Gbytes, where preferably about at least 20 Gbytes is available for various recording applications, and the remainder flexibly allocated for pause (live cache) recording applications in STB 300.

No thumb drive is taught here, and specifically, all transmission to a controlled device is either hard-wired or wireless in Ficco, not by a thumb drive as claimed. In a fair reading of this and other passages of Ficco it is clear that the memories referred to in Ficco, and referred to from Ficco by the examiner, are local memory to provide storage to the data produced until the data is transferred either over a hard-wired network or a wireless network to the device or devices to be controlled.

There is no teaching or suggestion in the references, either taken singly or in combination, for the use of a thumb drive to be carried to a device and engaged to the device to transfer the timing information.

Claims 20 and 31 are clearly patentable over the art cited and applied, taken either singly or in combination. Claims 28 and 39 are patentable at least as depended from a patentable claim. The applicant therefore respectfully requests that the claims be allowed

and that this case be passed quickly to issue. If there are any time extensions needed beyond any extension specifically requested with this amendment, such extension of time is hereby requested. If there are any fees due beyond any fees paid with this amendment, authorization is given to deduct such fees from deposit account 50-0534.

Respectfully Submitted,
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